



From the Mayor's Desk

December 2020

Extending a Helping Hand to Our Small Businesses

Since March of this year, the pandemic has upended the day-to-day lives of each of us including our small businesses which have suffered dearly trying to keep their doors open while also feeding their own families.

In late September, the cities in Gwinnett County were given federal grant money (CARES Act) to disperse in our communities. We had a deadline of December 1st but were determined to help our small business community. As a result of a tremendous effort by the city staff, we were able to award federal grants totaling \$2.66 million to 118 qualified local businesses. The funds will assist in providing relief to business operators that experienced a downturn earlier this year when they were forced to adjust their operations and/or shut down as a result of the pandemic.

The funds are part of monies received by the city from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, a \$2.2 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by the U.S. Congress in March of this year. The funds will help bolster our efforts to meet the needs of Peachtree Corners small business owners and operators most impacted by the pandemic.

The city targeted restaurants, retail stores, hair and nail salons, and fitness centers to receive the funds. Additionally, the city awarded funds to non-targeted businesses, such as medical offices and daycares, that met the criteria established by the city.

One recipient is Andrew Hoppen, owner of Taqueria del Mar. Andrew is also a resident. He told the city that ever since the pandemic, he's had to operate at 60-70% capacity based on prior years. As you may or may not know, the margin of profits for restaurants is typically 3-6% so it doesn't take an accountant to figure out that he could not continue operating his business much longer.

Our small business community is the lifeblood of our city. And we are not alone, some 30.2 million small business operate in this country according to the Small Business Association Office of Advocacy.

Businesses may use the monies awarded to them by the city for rent, payroll, utilities, and inventory. Overall, restaurants received 50% of the total funds, nail and hair salons, 9%, retail stores 5%, fitness centers 4%, other targeted business 6%. Non-targeted businesses received 25% of the total. Grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$50,000.

The city received over 160 applications for the Small Business Assistance Program. City staff spent countless hours reviewing applications and communicating with businesses to get the required documents to make informed decisions and to comply with the CARES Act.

The \$2.2 trillion CARES Act passed in March is the largest economic stimulus package in U.S. history amounting to 10% of total U.S. gross domestic product.

We all depend on the many small businesses in our city and we are very pleased that the city has the opportunity to help our small business community. These grants will also go a long way in helping our city's long-term economic recovery.

Most important, as we approach what has to be the strangest year in many, we were just grateful that we could help improve the lives of those struggling every day. Thanks to Gwinnett County for passing along the funding, and thanks to our staff for a real heroic effort in getting the checks processed. We hope it helps make life, and Christmas, a little more merry for our small businesses until this pandemic is over.

Please stay safe everyone.

Wishing you and your family happy holidays
Mike Mason, Mayor